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H5N1 Avian Influenza Feed Mill Guidance

What to do, at your station, every day — and what to do if something changes

Who this is for	Operators, receival and weighbridge staff, production and load-out staff, drivers, contractors and supervisors.
How to use it	Pages 2 and 3 are your daily, weekly and monthly actions, split by station. Page 4 is the driver and delivery vehicle card. Page 5 tells you when to escalate and who makes the call. Pages 6 and 7 are the STOP card and the never-do-these list for a suspected contamination. Laminate pages 2 to 7 and keep a set at the weighbridge and in every cab.
What it is not	This is a summary. It does not replace your site Emergency Disease Action Plan, your FeedSafe® system, or any direction given to you by a government authority. If an authority tells you something different to this card, do what the authority says.

EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE HOTLINE (24 hours) 1800 675 888

Australia — calls route automatically to your state or territory animal health authority. Follow current state or territory reporting requirements regarding dead bird sightings and escalate internally when in doubt. Current national situation: birdflu.gov.au

SFMCA – 02 5111 0207 or 0401 264 516.
Biosecurity Queensland: 13 25 23.
Biosecurity NSW – 1800 675 888.
Biosecurity Victoria – 1800 403 224.
Biosecurity SA – 08 8207 7900.
Biosecurity WA – 1300 374 731.
Biosecurity Tasmania – 1300 368 550.
Biosecurity NT – 1800 084 881.
New Zealand — Biosecurity New Zealand 0800 80 99 66.

The five rules

Everything else on this card follows from these.

	Rule	Why
1	**The feed is not the main risk. You are.**	Viral genetic material was still found on 18% of transport truck and crate samples after cleaning and disinfection, and infectious virus has been recovered from poultry-house dust. Vehicles, boots, clothing, hands and dust are the pathways that matter (Azeem et al., 2022 — note this study used low-pathogenicity H5N2; Huneau-Salaün et al., 2020; Filaire et al., 2022).
2	**Clean before you disinfect. Always.**	Organic matter shields the virus and neutralises most disinfectants. Cleaning alone removes more than 90% of pathogen load; disinfectant on top of mud does close to nothing (Animal Health Australia, 2026a). Note: H5N1 is more alcohol-resistant than seasonal flu — 36% ethanol is not enough (Bandou et al., 2022), use ≥60%.
3	**Contact time is the whole job.**	Keep the surface wet for the full time as per label directions. A disinfectant that dries in two minutes when the label says fifteen has not worked. Use a fast-acting disinfectant approved for avian influenza use where you can.
4	**Cold and wet means it lasts longer.**	In controlled experiments, at 22 °C H5N1 has a half-life of 3.3 hours on steel. At 4 °C it is 1.2 days — roughly nine times longer. Shaded truck hardware, cold cabs and refrigerated areas are not "probably fine by now" (Kaiser et al., 2025).
5	**When in doubt, stop and ask. Do not blend, sweep or dispose.**	Stopping a load costs money. Dispatching a suspect load costs the customer their flock and you your accreditation.

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Every day — by station

Everyone, at the gate

- ☐ **Enter through the controlled entry only**. Park personal vehicles outside production area. Delivery drivers see page 4
- ☐ **No farm-used boots or clothing** on site unless managed through an approved biosecurity system, e.g. disposable boot covers removed before entry, or changing into dedicated clean footwear/clothing. If using a boot-cleaning station, brush the tread first; a footbath over caked mud does nothing.
- ☐ **Declare** it if you have been on a poultry farm, near wild birds, at a rendering plant, abattoir, saleyard or affected premises — including at home (backyard poultry, pigeons, aviary birds).
- ☐ **Wash hands**, then use ≥60% alcohol hand rub at the zone changes.

Visitors and contractors

- ☐ **Book every visit in advance**. Send the site's biosecurity entry requirements to electricians, fitters, calibration services, pest controllers and any other contractor when booking.
- ☐ **Tools arrive clean and disinfected**. Before arrival, contractors confirm in writing that tools, instruments, calibration weights, ladders and toolboxes are free of organic matter then disinfected with an approved disinfectant.
- ☐ **The gate rules above apply in full**. Contractors who also service poultry farms, especially pest controllers, should visit the mill before any farm that day and observe any stand-down period the site requires.
- ☐ **Inspect tools at sign-in**. Anything visibly dirty is cleaned and disinfected outside the production area or stays out. Boxes and bags that cannot be disinfected stay in the vehicle.
- ☐ **Bring only what the job needs**. Use site-dedicated tools and pest-control equipment where practical. Escort contractors and record what they brought in and where they went.

Receival and weighbridge

- ☐ **Check the previous-loads declaration**. No chicken litter, municipal waste, animal-based fertiliser or restricted animal material in the previous three loads (Stock Feed Manufacturers' Council of Australia, 2021).
- ☐ **Walk the load before tipping**. Look for feathers, droppings, wetness, pest damage or unusual contamination.
- ☐ **Reject visibly contaminated vehicles** until approved wash-down and disinfection are confirmed. Check the truck underbody and mudflaps before it crosses the pit. Material dropping off the underbody goes straight into the feed.
- ☐ **Keep the pit covered** whenever it is not in use.
- ☐ **Clean spills immediately** — a spill is a bird attractant within minutes.
- ☐ **If you are unsure about a load**: quarantine it physically and in the system. Do not blend it away. Escalate.

Production and mill floor

- ☐ **Keep movement one-way where possible**: raw to finished.
- ☐ **For pelleted production**: Treat the post-pellet cooler and finished-feed area as the highest-risk zone on site. Nothing downstream of the conditioner gets another heat treatment - this is where the SFMCA manual and the IFIF guidance both say cleanliness standards must be highest.
- ☐ **Control dust at source**. Do not use compressed air to blow suspect dust around. Infectious virus has been recovered from poultry-house dust (Filaire et al., 2022).
- ☐ **Do not return suspect sweepings, dust-collector material** or screenings to feed.
- ☐ **Use only the cleaning tools assigned to your zone**. Colour-code them and keep them in the zone.

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- ☐ **Clean boots, belts, hand tools and mobile equipment** before crossing a zone boundary.
- ☐ **Report bird entry points**, damaged screens, roof leaks and cracked concrete the day you see them.

Load-out, dispatch and drivers

- ☐ **Sequence deliveries** lowest risk to highest risk. Breeder and young-stock sites first, then youngest to oldest, then clean to dirty. No split loads while risk is heightened.
- ☐ **Keep trailer lids closed** except when loading or cleaning.
- ☐ **Stay in the cab** at the farm wherever possible. Use farm-provided connection points. See page 4.
- ☐ **Treat these as high-risk for contamination**: pedals, steps, floor mats, steering wheel, gear selector, door handles. Clean the cabin daily — the footwell and the dashboard dust are the priority.
- ☐ **Full truck decontamination** weekly, and immediately before leaving and after returning from any disease-affected farm.
- ☐ **If you have been to a suspect or affected premises**: do not drive back to the mill on your normal route. Phone dispatch, stop at the nominated decontamination point, and follow the authority's instructions.

Housekeeping, wildlife and water

- ☐ **Clear feed spills the same day** and urgently fix any drainage problems causing standing water.
- ☐ **Check bird-proofing** on pits, doors, vents and ledges. Report gaps.
- ☐ **Log bird, rodent and pest activity** against a mapped inspection point — not just "saw some birds".
- ☐ **Use potable or validated treated water**. Keep treated water closed from treatment point to use.
- ☐ **Keep waste in closed, labelled containers**. Never use waste-handling tools on feed.
- ☐ **Do not touch, move or dispose of sick or dead wild birds**. Notify supervisor / site manager immediately. If safe, isolate the area and keep people, wild birds and vermin away (a crate, box or similar barrier over the carcass can prevent disturbance or scavenging) while awaiting instructions. Call the Biosecurity hotline as directed.

Every week and every month

Frequency	Action
Weekly	Full truck decontamination — soil and organic material off first, then disinfect tyres, wheel arches, mudflaps, steps, augers and hoses. Wash on hardstand with the wastewater captured.
Weekly	Walk the site perimeter and roofline looking for new bird activity, roosting, nesting or droppings on sheltered ledges. Cold, shaded, non-porous surfaces hold virus longest.
Weekly	Check that boot-wash stations, hand-rub dispensers and footbaths are stocked, and that footbath solution is being changed — not topped up. Ensure correct concentration of disinfectants are used.
Monthly	Review the pest and wildlife log for trend, not just for incidents. Three sightings at the same pit is a finding.
Quarterly	Toolbox talk on one section of this card. Practise the boot change and the disinfectant make-up — do not just read about them.
Annually	Full drill of the Emergency Disease Action Plan, including the seven-day traceback. Time it.
Annually	Personal quarantine declarations renewed for all employees; driver declarations current.
Annually	Reissue site entry requirements, including tool cleaning, to regular contractors and confirm acknowledgement.
Annually	Spot-check traceability: pick one finished lot and confirm you can name every ingredient lot in and every customer out, within one hour.

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Drivers and delivery vehicles

The truck is the most direct physical link between the mill and every farm it supplies. Keep this page in the cab.

Before you leave the mill

- ☐ **Clean uniform, every shift.** Company uniform clean and changed daily. Do not wear clothing or boots from home, another farm or another job.
- ☐ **Stock the cab.** Enough disposable boot covers for the whole shift, hand sanitiser (≥60% alcohol) or wipes, surface disinfectant wipes or spray, and a lidded bin or bag for used covers kept outside the cab (e.g. an external toolbox).
- ☐ **Walk around the truck.** Body panels, wheels, wheel arches, mudflaps, grille and steps free of mud, manure and organic material. Do not leave the mill with visible soiling.
- ☐ **Cab clean and ready.** Floors, mats and footwell free of mud and organic material, rubbish removed, and steering wheel, gear selector and door handles wiped down.
- ☐ **Check in at every site,** including the mill, using the site check-in system. Report any missed check-in to dispatch before the end of your shift with the site and your approximate arrival and departure times.

At the farm

- ☐ **Respect the farm's biosecurity boundary.** Follow the farm's signage and rules, drive only on the designated delivery route, park where directed and never cross into the farm's restricted or clean zone.
- ☐ **Use the wheel wash where provided** and make sure tyres and lower vehicle surfaces are fully covered. Report a faulty wheel wash straight away to the mill or farm manager.
- ☐ **Stay in the cab wherever possible.** Use farm-provided connection points and remote controls. Get out only for the parts of the delivery that need you.

If you have to leave the cab

- ☐ **Boot covers on before your feet touch the ground.** Take them off and bin them on farm, or put them in the used-cover container outside the cab, before you get back in. Covers never go into the cab.
- ☐ **Never enter a poultry shed or anteroom,** even for a moment, even if invited. Deliveries happen outside the shed.
- ☐ **Keep away from litter and mortalities.** Do not walk through, drive over, touch or move litter, manure, dead birds, mortality bins or compost. If they are in your way, stop and ask the farm to clear them.
- ☐ **Touch only what the delivery needs.** Use footbaths where provided, brushing off mud first. Sanitise your hands before you get back in the cab.

Back in the cab and at the end of the shift

- ☐ **If you left the cab,** wipe the steering wheel, gear selector and door handles before the next delivery.
- ☐ **End of shift:** remove rubbish, clear the footwell, wipe and disinfect high-touch surfaces, and restock boot covers and sanitiser for the next shift.
- ☐ **Daily/Weekly:** complete the Vehicle and Cab Cleanliness Checklist and Truck Cleaning Log (or equivalent site specific documents).

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When to escalate

Three states. Everyone on site should know when the mill is in heightened or suspected/confirmed state.

State	Trigger	What changes
ROUTINE	No H5 detection in the delivery catchment. National situation stable.	Everything on pages 2 to 4, done on schedule and recorded.
HEIGHTENED	Any of: - a confirmed H5 detection in a local government area you deliver into; - a customer placed under a housing or control order; - a government advisory naming your region; - unusual wild bird activity or dead wild birds on site, where the site manager judges the risk warrants it. The site manager makes this call and writes it on a prominent board or other clear communication area.	Reduce site access to essential only. Defer non-essential contractor and visitor attendance. Inspect essential contractors' tools at the gate before every entry. No split loads. Daily rather than weekly truck decontamination. Increase wildlife inspection to daily. Re-check delivery route sequencing. Brief every driver before every run. Confirm which customers are under a control order and what their gate rules now are.
SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED	Suspected or confirmed contamination of the mill, a load, a vehicle or a customer site linked to the mill.	Go to the STOP card overleaf. Activate the Emergency Disease Action Plan. Do not wait for confirmation before stopping movement.

What counts as "report it"?

Reporting criteria vary between jurisdictions and may change during an active response. Follow your state or territory reporting requirements and escalate internally when in doubt.

You will not be criticised for a report that turns out to be nothing.

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STOP CARD — suspected contamination

Work down this list in order. Do not skip ahead. Aim to complete steps 1 to 6 within 30 minutes.

#	Do this	Detail
1	**Stop movement.**	Halt dispatch of feed and ingredients. Stop vehicle and people movement on and off site where practicable. Do not release a truck that is already loaded until someone with authority says so.
2	**Isolate.**	Physically separate the suspect feed, ingredient, vehicle or area. Tag it. Lock it out in the system as well as on the ground so it cannot be picked by a later batch.
3	**Notify management.**	Notify the site manager and the biosecurity or quality manager. One incident controller, named, from this moment on.
4	**Call it in.**	Notify your relevant authority. Then activate the site Emergency Disease Action Plan.
5	**Control the perimeter.**	No unnecessary entry or exit. Post someone at the gate. Record everyone who was on site today.
6	**Freeze the records.**	Do not amend anything. Preserve batch records, weighbridge dockets, CCTV, delivery dockets and driver logs as they stand.
7	**Build the seven-day trace.**	Every feed and ingredient movement, every person, every vehicle and every piece of machinery, for the previous seven days. The authority will ask for it first.
8	**Tell your customers.**	Notify affected customers of supply delay. Say what you know and what you do not. Do not speculate about the cause.
9	**Wait for direction.**	Follow AUSVETPLAN and the responding agency. Do not begin cleaning, disposal or disinfection of a suspect area until the authority confirms sampling is complete — cleaning first can destroy the evidence that clears you.

Never do these

Do not	Because
Blend a suspect lot into a larger batch.	It converts one quarantined lot into a whole silo, and it is indefensible afterwards.
Dispatch a suspect load "because the customer needs it".	The customer needs the flock more.
Sweep or blow down dried droppings or suspect dust.	It aerosolises the most virus-dense material on site. Use controlled wet methods and PPE.
Handle or move a dead wild bird.	Isolate the area, notify site manager/supervisor and follow directions to call the local authority. Disposal rules vary by state and getting it wrong can spread virus and breach law.
Rely on a footbath over caked mud.	Organic matter neutralises the disinfectant. Brush first.
Treat a fixed holding period as a kill step.	There is no validated safe waiting time for feed, surfaces or vehicles.
Assume pelleting has sterilised the product.	Conditioning reduces viral load but has never been validated as a kill step for H5N1 in feed.
Treat a PCR-positive result as proof of infectious virus — or a negative as an all-clear.	PCR detects genetic material, including from dead virus. A negative only clears what was actually sampled.
Use a disinfectant for a use that is not on the label or the APVMA permit.	There are disinfectants proven to be effective for avian influenza. Work from APVMA portal and from product labels.
Let wash water reach stormwater, a waterway or a wetland.	Contain and capture it. Spraying wildlife habitat is ineffective and environmentally harmful.

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PPE and records

Minimum PPE

Task	Minimum PPE	Notes
Routine mill work, no visible contamination	Mill-dedicated and/or clean clothing and footwear; gloves as per normal task.	Hand hygiene at every zone change.
Cleaning bird droppings or visibly contaminated surfaces	P2/N95 respirator, eye protection, disposable gloves, coveralls, washable or disposable boots.	Wet methods only. Never dry sweep or blow down.
Entry to a suspect or restricted area	As above, plus a documented entry and exit record, and a defined doffing point.	Only trained, authorised staff. Nobody enters casually.
Handling concentrated disinfectant	Chemical-resistant gloves and apron, eye protection, and respiratory protection where the SDS requires it.	Never mix hypochlorite with acids, ammonia or other chlorinating chemicals. Ventilate.

Respirators carry a legal obligation

If your site requires staff to wear a P2/N95 respirator, work health and safety law requires fit-testing, training and records. Providing the mask is not the same as providing protection. Confirm your obligations before you write respirator use into a procedure.

Anyone who develops fever, respiratory symptoms or conjunctivitis after exposure to sick birds or contaminated material should report it and seek medical advice and should tell the clinician about the exposure.

Records you must be able to produce

An authority or auditor will ask for these. If you cannot produce them within an hour, the control does not exist.

Record
Supplier and ingredient risk approval
Previous-load and vehicle cleanliness declarations
Incoming and outgoing lot traceability (one step back, one step forward)
Visitor, contractor and vehicle movements, including contractor pre-arrival tool cleaning declarations
Delivery destinations and route sequence, including farm check-in records
Personal quarantine declarations (annual, all staff; current, all drivers)

Record
Truck and equipment cleaning and disinfection logs, including weekly vehicle and cab checklists
Disinfectant batch, dilution, preparation time and contact time
Wildlife and pest observations, with corrective actions
Water treatment checks
Training, drills and biosecurity deviations
Escalation state changes and who authorised them

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How long the virus lasts — the short version

Figures below are largely from experimental studies under controlled conditions and **are not** operational holding periods. Real-world contamination (organic matter, faeces, dust, moisture, variable conditions) can change survival significantly. A half-life is the time for the amount of virus to fall by half; it is not the time until none is left.

Where	Temp	Figure	What kind of figure
Stainless steel	22 °C	Half-life 3.3 hours	Half-life (Kaiser et al., 2025)
Stainless steel	4 °C	Half-life 1.2 days	Half-life (Kaiser et al., 2025)
Plastic / polypropylene	22 °C / 4 °C	Half-life 2.5 hours / 1.4 days	Half-life (Kaiser et al., 2025)
Plastic	25 °C	About 26 hours	Time until not detected (Bandou et al., 2022)
Rubber (nitrile)	22 °C / 4 °C	Half-life 3.3 hours / 12.2 hours	Half-life (Kaiser et al., 2025)
Skin	25 °C	About 4.6 hours	Time until not detected (Bandou et al., 2022)
Clothing / coveralls	20 °C	About 1 day	Approximate planning figure (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2024)
Bird droppings	20 °C / 4 °C	About 7 days / about 60 days	Approximate planning figure (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2024)
Feathers	20 °C / 4 °C	15 days / 160 days	Approximate planning figure (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2024)
Poultry-house dust	Field	Live virus found in 12 of 25 samples	Virus isolation — the real thing, not just genetic material (Filaire et al., 2022)

Two rules for reading any of these numbers

Nothing here is a safe waiting period and figures **must not** be interpreted as operational holding periods or as proof that a surface is safe after a given time. There is **no** validated hold time after which feed, a surface or a vehicle can be declared clear on elapsed time alone.

Finding genetic material (a PCR positive) is not the same as finding live virus — and a negative result only clears the spot that was actually swabbed.

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This guide summarises the site H5N1 biosecurity guidance. It does not replace the site Emergency Disease Action Plan, FeedSafe® requirements, APVMA label and permit directions, or any direction issued by a government authority during a declared emergency animal disease response.

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